Thursday, October 30, 2008

GTEC 2008 Distinction Awards

Two Alberta Education branches were honoured with medals at the GTEC 2008 Distinction Awards Program.

Stakeholder Technology Branch was awarded a gold medal in the Human Dimension category for Videoconferencing in the K-12 Education System.

The Performance Measurement and Reporting Branch was awarded a silver medal in the Information Management category for its Accountability Pillar Online Reporting Initiative (APORI).

The GTEC Distinction Awards celebrate innovation, excellence and leadership in managing information and information technology in the public sector in Canada. More information on the GTEC Distinction Awards is available at http://www.gtec.ca/distinction-awards/distinction-awards-overview.php.

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tech news is an electronic newsletter for Alberta's education community. It is produced by Alberta Education, Stakeholder Technology Branch.

Send your questions, suggestions, or article submissions to tech.news@gov.ab.ca.

Next edition: November 2008

LINKS:

Alberta Education website – Technology section

LearnAlberta.ca website

Emerge One-to-One Laptop Learning initiative website

Technology and High School Success initiative website

Alberta Education Annual Report

On September 30, 2008, the Alberta Education 2007/2008 Annual Report was released. This document is available online at http://education.alberta.ca/department/annualreport/2007-2008.aspx. A CD-ROM version will also be available this year, and will be distributed to all school jurisdictions when it is available.

Accomplishments in the area of learning and technology include:

- Goal 1, Strategy 1.11 - Enhancing Teaching and Learning through Technology (page 27).
    - Funding to increase videoconferencing capacity, technology infrastructure, and classroom tecnnology;
    - Reducing the cost of technology ownership through the Provincial Microsoft Licensing Agreement, and Education Standing Offers;
    - Providing advice on the best practices for technology implementation ; and
    - Implementing a one-to-one laptop research project with 20 school jurisdictions.

- Goal 1, Strategies 1.4, 1.9, and 1.10 – An Alberta Approach to Distributed Learning (page 28).
    - Engaging in discussions with stakeholders on the development of Alberta's Distributed Learning Strategy and implementation plan, and identifying three priority actions; and
    - Providing additional online resources and improved access to online resources to support distributed learning through such sites as LearnAlberta.ca and Tools4Teachers.

For more in-depth information on these accomplishments, visit the annual report website.

Technology and High School Success Update

The Technology and High School Success initiative has now entered its first year of implementation. Participants have submitted their status reports and all projects are on track. They are reporting a great deal of excitement amongst staff, students and communities. A few projects have experienced challenges and delays but have made adjustments to their plans to accommodate for these minor setbacks.

Representatives from all 24 projects attended a Grant Recipients' Meeting on October 21, 2008 in Sherwood Park. The meeting featured a project status report, an introduction to the Provincial-level research plan, and a session on measuring student engagement. Many participants also attended the optional professional learning day on October 20, 2008. This included sessions on critical thinking, developing professional learning opportunities, program sustainability and a hands-on session for technical staff.

For more information on the Technology and High School Success initiative, please contact Brad Clarke, Project Manager, at Bradley.Clarke@gov.ab.ca. The Alberta Education website for this project also contains research and information that is useful to anyone working in a high school setting,and is available at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/technology/techsuccess.aspx.

Emerge One-to-One Laptop Learning Community of Practice Event

The Emerge One-to-One Laptop Learning initiative is in its second year of implementation. Information is being gathered on the work done in the first year, and will be made available as soon as possible.

On October 20 and 21, 2008, the participants in the Emerge initiative attended a professional learning event in Sherwood Park. Participants were involved in a variety of sessions aimed at project leads, principals, teachers, and technical support staff. Cheryl Lemke, the President and CEO of the Metiri Group, presented a keynote address on "Engagement Matters", and a session on "Measuring Engagement". The PowerPoints for these sessions can be accessed at http://www.metiri.com/AE/PresentationSlides.html.

For more information on this project, please contact Karen Shipka, Project Manager, at Karen.Shipka@gov.ab.ca. The Alberta Education website for this project also contains research and information that is useful to anyone working with Grade 4 to 12 students in this area. The website is available at http://education.alberta.ca/admin/technology/emerge-one-to-one.aspx.

Distributed Learning Update

Online Forum

Online conversations have been launched on the Distributed Learning Forum Online Community at www.arpdc.ab.ca/dlforum. The discussions, which will explore how distributed learning might take place in Alberta and explore possible ways to enable learning to happen independent of time and/or location, will take place from October 20 to November 3, 2008.

Information collected during the Discover Phase have been made available on the Distributed Learning Forum Online Community at www.arpdc.ab.ca/dlforum. Interested participants should become familiar with the materials prior to attending the live DL Forum on November 4, 2008.

Live Distributed Learning Forum

Registration is now open for the Distributed Learning Forum on November 4, 2008. The forum will make recommendations toward a provincial approach to distributed learning. Please follow the links below to register at your preferred site.

Main Site - Oasis Edmonton Conference Centre, 10930-177 Street, Edmonton

Region 1 - Northwest Regional Learning Consortium, TA Norris Middle School, 8701-95 Street, Peace River

Region 2 - Learning Network Educational Services, St. Paul Regional High School, 4701 – 44 Street, St. Paul

Region 4 - Central Alberta Regional Consortium, Wolf Creek Public School Board Office, 6000 – Highway 2A, Ponoka

Region 5 - Calgary Regional Consortium, location 1, St. Paul Centre, 124-24 Avenue NE, Calgary

Region 5 - Calgary Regional Consortium, location 2, Rm. 101, Manning Centre, SE Wing, Ernest Manning High School, 3600-16 Avenue SW

Region 6 - Southern Alberta Professional Development Consortium , Lethbridge SD 51 Education Centre, 433-15 Street South, Lethbridge

Region 7 - Consortium pou r le perfectionnement professionnel:

North - Oasis Edmonton Conference Centre;

South - Room T110B, Mount Royal College, 4825 Richard Road SW, Calgary

All interested participants must registered to attend. For further information, please contact Hélène Fournier, Project Director of Alberta's Distributed Learning Strategy, by e-mail at Helene.Fournier@gov.ab.ca or by phone at 780-934-8711.

Excellence in Teaching Award

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2009 Excellence in Teaching Awards. A nomination package, including details of eligibility and selection criteria, is available at www.education.alberta.ca by clicking on the "Teachers" tab and then on "Excellence in Teaching Awards." Nominations can be submitted to Alberta Education until February 5, 2009. This year, 130 semi-finalists will be selected. Twenty of those semi-finalists will receive Provincial Excellence in Teaching Awards, and three will receive SMARTer Kids Foundation Innovative Use of Technology Awards.

Secondment Opportunity, Field Services, Senior Manager

Secondment/Employment Contract
Project Manager
Zone Services
Learning Supports Division, Alberta Education

Duties:
A full time project manager is required to lead our High School Flexibility Enhancement Pilot Project for four years. The project manager will provide leadership, high quality service and support to Alberta Education stakeholders and nine provincial high schools.

This position will work closely with the pilot schools to develop project proposals, collect data related to them, and report this data to an external advisory committee. It will assist in the development of an accountability framework for the delivery of the Programs of Study and conduct an analysis of the results and assist in the development of a recommendation for Executive Team regarding the requirement for 25 hours of face-to-face instruction including an accountability model for high schools and a communication and implementation plans.

Thinking beyond the boundaries of traditional education will be a strong asset along with a passion for influencing the future of high school course delivery in the province. This exciting three year pilot project will challenge 9 pilot high schools to determine if the requirement of students having access to 25 hours of face-to-face instruction per course credit should be maintained.

Qualifications:
- Strong leadership skills
- Experience as a high school principal and/or supervisor at the central office level.
- Strong knowledge of high school programming issues and challenges.
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to facilitate dialogue that engages a diverse range of stakeholders and clients.
- Strong understanding of the educational political landscape.
- Project management knowledge and experience.
- Strong management skills (e.g., planning, budget controlling, communicating (writing/reporting, presenting), facilitating change, meeting deadlines, issues management, etc.)
- The ability to challenge the status quo in high school programming.
- Ability to establish and facilitate an effective internal advisory team.
- A strong understanding of current department/GOA initiatives (e.g., Distributed Learning Initiative, Literacy Framework, High school curriculum development, CTS initiative, technology initiatives, 21st Century Learning

Initiative, various assessment initiatives, Wellness initiative, High School Completion, etc.).

- A strong understanding of the needs of the province's diverse student populations (e.g., FNMI, recent immigrants and refugees, student with special needs, etc.).

The successful candidate will report to the Zone 5 Services Director. For further information about this position, please contact David Woloshyn, Director, Zone 5 Services at (780) 415-9312 or through e-mail at david.woloshyn@gov.ab.ca.

Closing Date: October 31, 2008
Competition Title: Field Services, Senior Manager

Please send your resume quoting this competition number to David Woloshyn, Director, Zone 5 Services, 9 Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard, 10044 – 108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 5E6. We thank all candidates for their interest, however, only individuals selected for an interview will be contacted.

Upcoming Events

Jurisdictional Videoconferencing Capacity 2008

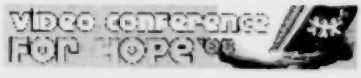
The Jurisdictional Videoconferencing Capacity 2008 Final Report survey was e-mailed to each jurisdiction in September. Responses to this survey are due November 30, 2008.

Jurisdiction Technology Contact (JTC) Events 2008/2009

Registration for JTC events is open to Jurisdiction Technology Contacts only.

- November 21, 2008, at the Greenwood Inn in Calgary. Deadline for registration is November 14, 2008.
- May 13, 2009, in Edmonton.

Video Conference for Hope



On November 5, 2008, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, the third Annual Video Conference for Hope will bring the world together to help raise funds and awareness for education in developing countries. The VC for Hope will bring over 50 schools together to celebrate education and learn about the conditions some students struggle through to enjoy this privilege.

Along with special sessions from the United Nations, Change for Children and interactive, student-led workshops, the Video Conference for Hope will bring students from around the world together with the children that the event is raising funds to build a school in Guatemala .

The day will be made up of multiple sessions, targeted at specific age groups, from Elementary to Secondary, in which students will listen to experts, debate issues, share personal stories, sing, dance, and promote the right to have an education, free of persecution and hardship.

For more information, please contact Terry Godwaldt by e-mail at terry.godwaldt@epsb.ca or visit the Video

Conference for Hope's wiki at http://vcofhope.wikispaces.com/.

Speak Up Day 2008

Speak Up Day is an annual international research project on key educational issues facilitated by Project Tomorrow. Alberta school jurisdictions have the option to participate in this online survey, that will be open from October 20 to December 19, 2008.

Schools and jurisdictions that choose to participate will be able to view their quantitative survey results online in February 2009, free of charge. The data can then be used for planning and community discussion purposes.

Survey topics for this year will include how technology is used in schools, characteristics of the 21st century classroom, emerging technologies, improving achievement in science, and fostering media and information literacy skills. This year's surveys will be available for students (K to Grade 2, Grades 3 to 5, and Grades 6 to 12), teachers, parents, and school leaders.

Project Tomorrow is a nonprofit education group whose vision is to ensure that today's students are well prepared to be tomorrow's innovators, leaders and engaged citizens of the world. Net Day, Speak Up, (http://www.tomorrow.org/index.html) is its annual research project that collects and reports unfiltered feedback from students, parents and teachers on key educational issues and aims to raise awareness of the importance of including these viewpoints in the education dialogue. Since its inception the project has collected the viewpoints of over 850,000 K-12 students, teachers and parents from Canada, all 50 US states, and Mexico.

To sign up for this survey visit the Speak Up website at http://www.tomorrow.org/speakup/index.html.

LearnAlbert.ca Updates

The pre-launch version of the LearnAlberta website is now available at http://new.learnalberta.ca. All new resources will be launched on this site. The old LearnAlberta.ca will continue to function to ensure a smooth transition for those who rely on the website.

New and Updated Resources

Social Studies Resources

Athenian Democracy

Democracy and its origins in ancient Athens are explored in this video. The Athenian concept of citizenship, contemporary political structures and government decision making processes are discussed in detail.

Understanding Local Government: Council – What Does it Do?

There are a variety of sources of municipal funding in Canada. This video reviews local government responsibility

for collecting taxes, user fees and administering provincial grants to deliver services.

Understanding Local Government: Getting Involved

This video outlines opportunities for citizens to participate in local government by communicating with their representatives, through public consultations and voluntary committee work.

Understanding Local Government: Revenue and Spending

There are a variety of sources of municipal funding in Canada. This video reviews local government responsibility for collecting taxes, user fees and administering provincial grants to deliver services.

The Great Bear Rainforest Virtual Tour

After years of protests and pressure in the marketplace, the British Columbia forestry industry was prompted to negotiate agreements with environmental organizations, First Nations groups and other stakeholders. This digital slideshow was produced by The Rainforest Solutions Project to promote awareness of and involvement in the movement to conserve the Great Bear Rainforest, the largest coastal temperate rainforest in the world.

The Story of the Great Bear Rainforest

This program documents the controversy surrounding conservation of the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia. Stakeholders came together after years of clear-cut logging, protests and conflict to negotiate agreements framed by ecosystem-based management. The video also refers to the remaining challenges to successfully implementing the solutions.

Aboriginal Studies Resource

Aboriginal Studies: Aboriginal Arts Journey (this resource is also under Social Studies)

Explore the work and words of Aboriginal artists (writers, painters, musicians, dancers) and Elders from across Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Students can discover artwork, legends, artifacts and interviews to enhance their understandings of the diversity of Aboriginal cultural expression. The locations of First Nations communities, Métis settlements and historic sites are among the features of an interactive map.

Second Language Resource

Bonjour les amis (added scenario 5)

Scenario 5 has been added to this interactive digital resource that supports elements of the Grade 4 and Grade 5 French as a Second Language Nine-year Program of Studies. The Bonjour les amis! resource provides presentation, practice and production activities. Each scenario starts with an animation that presents new linguistic and cultural content. Follow-up activities involve listening and reading as well as pronunciation, writing and speaking.

Mathematics Resource

Math planning guides for Grade 8

Seven planning guides for Grade 8 Mathematics have been launched. These are step-by-step guides to assist teachers with planning mathematics instruction.

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